

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 DRC-01 /139 W

----- 124769

R 141606Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8051

INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 2858

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, DA

SUBJECT: FORTHCOMING ELECTION - FACTS AND FIGURES

REF: COPENHAGEN 2793, 2806, 2817

SUMMARY:AS DANISH ELECTORAL SYSTEM FAVORS FORMATION OF NEW PARTIES IT SEEMS CERTAIN THAT GLISTRUP'S ANTI-TAX PROGRESSIVE PARTY AND ERHARD JAKOBSEN'S CENTER DEMOCRATS WILL JOIN PARTIES ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN FOLKETING WITH SIGNIFICANT REPRESENTATION. COMMUNIST PARTY AND CHRISTIAN PEOPLES PARTY MAY ALSO OBTAIN MINIMAL REPRESENTATION. ALTHOUGH EXPANSION OF PARTIES IN FOLKETING FROM FIVE TO SEVEN OR NINE WOULD COMPLICATE PROCEDURES, IT WOULD NOT CONSTITUTE CHAOS AS CLAIMED BY OLD-LINE PARTIES. IT WILL, HOWEVER, SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGE TRADITIONAL PARLIAMENTARY PATTERN AND COMPLICATE FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT COALITION. END SUMMARY.

1. IN DECEMBER 4 ELECTION 175 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT WILL BE ELECTED FROM METROPOLITAN DENMARK'S THREE
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ELECTORAL REGIONS. FROM GREATER COPENHAGEN - 24, FROM

THE ISLANDS (WHICH INCLUDES THE REST OF ZEALAND, FYN, BORNHOLM, LOLLAND, ETC.) - 70 AND FROM JUTLAND - 81. OF REMAINING FOUR MEMBERS OF 179 MEMBER PARLIAMENT, TWO GREENLAND MEMBERS ARE TO BE ELECTED SAME DAY WHILE TWO FAEROESE MEMBERS WILL NOT BE ELECTED UNTIL DECEMBER 13. THIS NEW DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS REPRESENTS LOSS OF TWO COPENHAGEN SEATS IN FAVOR OF ISLANDS, DUE TO MOVEMENT OF POPULATION TO SUBURBS.

2. DUE TO 1971 ACT LOWERING VOTING AGE FROM 21 TO 20, APPROXIMATELY 3.4 MILLION OUT OF 5 MILLION DANES WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE. IF 86-89 PERCENT VOTER PARTICIPATION RATE REGISTERED IN LAST FIVE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IS MAINTAINED, TOTAL VOTE SHOULD RUN ABOUT 3.0 MILLION (AN AVERAGE OF SLIGHTLY OVER 17,000 VOTES REQUIRED TO WIN ONE SEAT).

3. CONTESTING THE ELECTION WILL BE ELEVEN PARTIES; THE FIVE PRESENTLY REPRESENTED IN PARLIAMENT - SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (70 SEATS IN SEPTEMBER 1971 ELECTION), CONSERVATIVES (31), MODERATE LIBERALS (30), RADICAL LIBERALS (27), SOCIALIST PEOPLES PARTY (17); PLUS FOUR SMALL PARTIES WHICH FAILED TO WIN REPRESENTATION IN 1971 - COMMUNIST PARTY, LEFT SOCIALISTS, THE HENRY GEORGIST JUSTICE PARTY, CHRISTIAN PEOPLES PARTY; AND TWO NEW PARTIES, MOGENS GLISTRUP'S ANTI-TAX PROGRESSIVE PARTY AND ERHARD JAKOBSEN'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC SPLINTER PARTY, CENTER DEMOCRATS (MINISTRY OF INTERIOR SOURCE ANTICIPATES JAKOBSEN WILL EASILY BE ABLE TO SUBMIT 19,000 SIGNATURES REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION BEFORE NOVEMBER 20 DEADLINE).

4. DANISH ELECTORAL SYSTEM, BUILT ON STANDARD PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATIONAL MODEL, TENDS TO ENCOURAGE FORMATION OF NEW PARTIES. ONLY 50 PERCENT OF THE VOTERS ARE BELIEVED TO BE COMMITTED ONE-PARTY VOTERS; REMAINDER SHIFT READILY ACROSS PARTY LINES TO REGISTER POLITICAL MOOD OF THE MOMENT. THIS FLUIDITY, PLUS LIBERAL QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW PARTIES, PROVIDES TECHNICAL EXPLANATION FOR FORMATION DURING PAST YEAR OF GLISTRUP'S AND ERHARD JAKOBSEN'S NEW PARTIES AND FOR PHENOMENAL SUPPORT POLLS

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INDICATE THEY HAVE ATTRACTED AWAY FROM ESTABLISHED PARTIES. ALTHOUGH BOTH APPEAR TO BE RECIPROCALLY COMPETITIVE (NOVEMBER 8 POLITIKEN POLL SHOWED CENTER DEMOCRATS WITH 18 PERCENT POPULAR VOTE AND GLISTRUP WITH FIVE PERCENT - DOWN DRASTICALLY FROM THE 13-15 PERCENT HE HAS MAINTAINED ALL FALL), IT IS PROBABLE THAT BOTH PARTIES WILL OBTAIN A NUMBER OF SEATS IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT. MOREOVER, BOTH COMMUNIST PARTY AND CHRISTIAN PEOPLES PARTY, WHICH WAS

SHORT ONLY 600 VOTES IN 1971, MAY WIN MINIMUM REPRESENTATION OF ONE TO FOUR SEATS. ALTHOUGH THE ESTABLISHED PARTIES ARE CLAIMING IN SELF-DEFENSE THAT AN INCREASED NUMBER OF PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT WOULD CREATE CHAOS, IN FACT THE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS WOULD BE MANAGEABLE. WHAT IS UNPREDICATABLE IN VIEW OF THE ADDITIONAL PARTIES, AND THIS FOR THE OLD-LINE PARTIES IS MOST UNSETTLING, IS THE PROBABLE POLITICAL COALITION THAT MIGHT SERVE AS A GOVERNMENT BASIS FOLLOWING THE ELECTION.

5. IN SHORT, THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION FINDS DENMARK IN AN UNUSUALLY FLUID POLITICAL SITUATION, WHICH WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN THE TRADITIONAL PATTERN OF PARTIES IN THE FOLKETING. MOST SIGNIFICANT COULD WELL BE THE REDUCTION OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY STRENGTH - MANY OBSERVERS ARE PREDICTING A LOSS OF 20 SEATS - AND THE FACT THAT THE NEW PARTIES MIGHT INDIVIDUALLY OR JOINTLY HOLD BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN THE SOCIALIST AND NON-SOCIALIST BLOCS. CROWE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION FORECASTS, ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 NOV 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: cunninfx
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973COPENH02858
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: COPENHAGEN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731135/aaaaaznk.tel
Line Count: 134
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: COPENHAGEN 2793, 2806, 2817
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12-Sep-2001 by rowellE0>; APPROVED <24-Sep-2001 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FORTHCOMING ELECTION - FACTS AND FIGURES
TAGS: PINT, DA, FO, GL, (JAKOBSEN, EHARD), (GLISTRUP)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005